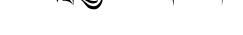
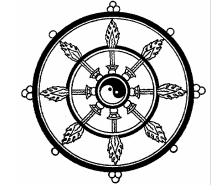
Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering

७७ तें र्ह्हेर अर्केन क' परिं र लें।





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We'll begin with the usual breathing meditation. Relax your body and sit in a comfortable meditation posture and examine why we need to calm our minds. Consider that if one's mind is not calmed, it can bring immense harm to one's own life and to the lives of many other beings. So produce a strong determination to not be influenced by this unruly mind, even for a second. Make it your intention to bring the mind fully under control so as to make it serviceable and of benefit to you. With this motivation, begin the actual meditation to calm or control your mind. Remove all outgoing thoughts so that nothing can arouse desire or hatred within you. Make sure that the mind stays inside without being distracted to external objects.

Focus the mind on the breath as you inhale and exhale through the nostrils.

It's important to know what is essential in meditation practice. First, there is the need to bring peace and clarity to our minds- these minds obscured by the various delusions like desire and hatred. So the object of focus in our meditations should be one which doesn't excite or increase these delusions. Further, it is said, that the purpose of meditation is to decrease the delusions. If the meditation practice is done properly, it has the effect of getting our minds used to objects which don't excite delusions within us and, as a result, the delusions will have less power over us. Our minds will become very clear- allowing us some happiness and inner peace.

To continue the commentary on "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons", we are up to verse 13 which reads:

Verse 13

"When we lack any freedom, but must obey others. This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.

Till now we have looked down upon those who are lowly and used them as servants for our own selfish needs.

Hereafter lets offer our service to others with humble devotion of body and mind."

So, this verse is an instruction for those who are suffering from a lack of freedom, from being oppressed by others. Of course, in this country we don't often see people suffering enslavement by others. But we do see many people who have no freedom, in the sense that their lives are totally controlled by an influential superior. Finding themselves under the power of such an oppressor, they have no time for rest, they are forced to do things against

their wishes, there's always something more to do. Consequently they experience great suffering, continuous mental and physical torture.

If we find ourselves in such a situation, this verse says we must realise that being forced to suffer this oppressive rule of another is the result of having done the same to others in the past. As it states, "Til now we have looked down upon those who are lowly, and used them as servants for our own selfish needs".

It is the result of having belittled others, of having abused the wishes or the rights of other people in the past.

So, in this way, understanding the cause of our situation, the advice then is to resolve to devote one's life towards benefiting other beings. We should replace the selfcherishing attitude with the attitude of cherishing others, because the root cause of harming others is the selfcherishing attitude. Holding this attitude, we have a strong desire for happiness, for the pleasure of victory mainly for ourselves alone, and with this selfish motivation we've committed many harmful actions towards others. We've disregarded their rights, and ignored their wishes. But, in the end, the harm we cause to others returns to us, all the suffering falls upon oneself alone. The cause of one's suffering is causing harm to others, and the cause of this is the self-cherishing attitude. Thus we generate the motivation to cherish other beings from the heart and to engage in any actions which will bring them benefit.

We need simply to observe those who live their lives under the oppressive rule of others to realise that we do not want to be in that situation ourselves, enslaved and abused by others, exploited by them. We can think of how some very rich people can take advantage of the poor, of how the strong can exploit the weak.

Though we cannot, at the moment, be accused of abusing others or taking advantage of them, if we do not train our minds in this, it is still possible for us to abuse others when we find an opportunity. If, for instance, you're vested with more power in a work situation, if you are not careful, it is very easy to abuse those who are below you. It is very easy to cause them problems by ordering some huge load of work in a very short period of time, or by asking them to complete a task which you know they cannot perform or for which they have no knowledge. In our relationships too, where one partner is more knowledgeable or more educated than the other, it is very easy for one partner to belittle the other.

So, looking at ourselves, if we imagine, say, that we have great wealth, it would be easy to look down upon poorer people; if we were physically very strong, it would be very easy to intimidate a weaker person.

What we are instructed here to do is to use our greater knowledge or skill to help others at work, to think how we can share our knowledge and skills with new staff, a new employer. Try to be very helpful to them. Be concerned that they are new to the workplace, and that there's much you can help them learn. Trying to be kind and helpful in this way is the true practice of Dharma. This is the practice a very kind and good hearted person.

So, in this way, this verse contains advice with breadth enough to be relevant to all of us.

The question of how and in what way to benefit other beings only arises because of a lack of love, sympathy and kind feelings towards others. Where these are absent, no matter what you possess in terms of wealth, in terms of knowledge and experience and so forth, no matter how much these can increase your personal wealth, you cannot benefit others so you cannot truly benefit yourself. You cannot benefit your mind. Its in feeling ourselves close to other beings, in terms of more friendship shared with others, more people trusting and liking us, that gives a sense of joy to our lives. Joy doesn't arise from the selfish mind. To benefit other beings the most important cause is to cultivate a true feeling of love and a thought of care towards them. As you generate this altruistic thought, try to see that there are always people you can help, always there are people with whom you can share your knowledge, your skills. When you do this, do it out of love, totally wanting to give and, because you want to make the gift, there are no conditions to it.

We can see for ourselves that there are many people who already have such a nature, a very loving, generous nature, and it doesn't matter where they go or who they meet, they are always very helpful to others, and so they always enjoy harmonious relationships. Becoming like them, not only are you able then to benefit many other beings in need, but there's great benefit to your own life as well.

So we will leave the teaching here. We'll do some chanting of the Buddha's mantra, so, again, if you could choose the meditation posture, making sure that your body is relaxed and that your mind has stopped racing after external things. Make sure that the mind just rests within you. With this stable state of mind then, we chant the mantra and we focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks Edited by Richard Garward Edit checked against the tapes by Richard Garward Edited Version

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